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Student's League, and on the evening of January 7th, a certificate to that effect was duly handed to him, with appropriate ceremonies, including addresses by Professors Felix Adler and W. J. Stillman, and Messrs. Chase, Millet, and Beckwith. The sum at the disposal of the trustees is only \$15,000, which is not enough to enable them to carry out fully the purposes of the founders. An appeal is made for further contributions, and it is to be hoped that it will meet with a generous response. The Red Star Line of Transatlantic steamers, by the way—already on excellent terms with our artists—has kindly offered to each beneficiary of the scholarship a free cabin passage to Europe and back.

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KNOWING that Henry Irving is very strict in enforcing the rule against allowing strangers to be present during rehearsals, I was surprised to see in The New York Herald recently a full and graphic account of a rehearsal of "The Lyons Mail" at the Star Theatre. The reporter explains, however, that he was there "secretly." The incident recalls an amusing experience Mr. Irving narrated to me, last winter, as having happened to him "out West." Early in a rehearsal, a reporter of a local paper was discovered at the "wings," and was firmly but courteously requested to leave. He did; but, nevertheless, on the following day his journal published a full account of the rehearsal. It was so absurd that Mr. Irving found it worth while to denounce it. Upon this a reporter of a rival journal called upon him, expressed his sympathy, and offered to put everything right if he might be allowed to attend a rehearsal and, through his paper, "give a true account." He was told that was out of the question.

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"BUT, I'll tell you what I'll do," said Mr. Irving; "I'll let you know just what we do at a rehearsal." "Thank you very much," said the reporter, and he took out his pencil and note-book. "Well, in the first place, we have classes." "Classes?" echoed the reporter. "Yes. Various classes. Classes for walking; classes for pronunciation, and so forth. I attend some of them myself—principally the walking and the pronouncing classes. None of us, you know, are ever too old to learn. Now, some of the papers have criticised my walking, and I am taking lessons, so as to improve my gait." "Really!" gasped the journalist. "And what is 'the pronouncing class'?" "Oh, that," said Mr. Irving, "is one we all attend. We are cockneys, you know, and of course misplace our aitches—the best of us do it. The instructor of the class, I tell you, is kept pretty busy sometimes. He will say, for instance, 'Mr. Irving, excuse me, but I think you dropped your aitch again. "H-ecuba," "H-ecuba," not "Ecuba." Thank you, that's better.' I think you'll find we are all much improved since your papers pointed out our defects in pronunciation." And so he went on. The journalist took it all down, and next day seriously reported everything as it was told him.

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RECENTLY I commented on a paragraph going the rounds of the press, called "the romance of a picture," to the effect that a painting by a Mrs. Fassett, which was supposed to have been lost during proceedings for debt against her husband and herself, was stolen by friends and hidden until the proceedings were adjusted or discontinued. As a work of art, the picture is absolutely worthless, and the stealing of it seemed to me at the time a very venial offence. But now it appears it was sequestered for a purpose; for I read in The Sun that Senator Sherman asks Congress to buy it for \$15,000, and he also asks that the government shall pay a Mrs. Ransom—another artist unknown to fame—\$10,000 for a portrait she has painted of General Thomas. A few weeks ago The World reported that it was proposed to buy—for \$20,000, if I remember aright—a quantity of etched plates, by another unknown, of scenes and incidents of the civil war, although the government already possesses a full set of proof impressions of the same. Such reckless jobbery—it can be called by no other name—is unspeakably disgraceful in view of the crass ignorance of our national legislators who tax heavily all imported paintings, while doing nothing whatever to encourage native talent. Shall we never have in the councils of the nation even an active minority of cultivated gentlemen, who, appreciating the need of an æsthetic leaven in this most philistine of peoples, will deliver us from the soulless, sordid politician? Will our Congress never rise above the vulgar level of a local Board of Aldermen?

MONTEZUMA.

Dramatic Feuilleton.

Hamlet.—Good, my lord, will you see the players well bestowed?
Polonius.—My lord, I will use them according to their desert.

Hamlet.

JAMES DUFF, who brought the old Standard Theatre its first success in "Pinafore," secured the lease of the new Standard, and he solemnly devotes the house to opera comique. It is to be, in effect, a rival of the Casino, and Rudolph Aronson has anything but a pleasant prospect with Col. McCaull's engagement nearing its close, and the enterprising competition of the new theatre.

"A Trip to Africa" was a success, on the first night, because of its gorgeous costumes and scenery and light, waltz music. The libretto is very dull and dreary, and should have been re-written for New York, after being tested through the provinces. But the idea seems to be that everybody must come to see the new house, and the entertainment will be improved when the novelty of the theatre has worn off.

Col. McCaull promptly replied to the opening move of the new Standard by producing "Apajune, the Water Nymph," at the Casino with even more gorgeousness and lavishness. The establishment of two permanent opera comique houses in New York is a sign of the times not to pass without notice.

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LAST month was memorable for two other theatrical changes. The Third Avenue Theatre was handed over to the Germans; re-christened the Apollo, and opened under the management of Herr Neuendorf, with Magda Irschick as his star. I have before spoken of the Third Avenue as a superfluous theatre, and this disposition of it shows that my prophetic faculty has not waned.

The Rankins, who tried in vain to conduct the Third Avenue, were offered a complimentary benefit to cover some of their losses. I am afraid that Herr Neuendorf will soon need a complimentary benefit also. A clever man, he always gets ahead of his public. He gave us farces, years ago, before the mania for farces began; he was just in advance of the times with light operas, and now he presents Magda Irschick to a public who prefer to go down to the Thalia and hear "Nanon," another brilliant bouffe opera.

The other change was the sudden destruction by fire of the Theatre Comique and the transfer of Harrigan and Hart to the Park Theatre. The Comique was considered fire-proof; it was totally destroyed in half an hour. The managers were not insured, and do not care to rebuild, as their lease of the ground has only three years to run.

In a fortnight after the fire new scenery was painted, new properties were prepared, and the Harrigan and Hart Company opened at the Park in a new vaudeville, called "McAllister's Legacy." The play is of the genuine "Mulligan" stock, and all the favorites of the company have their usual parts in it.

The opening was remarkable for the outpouring of New Yorkers to greet their popular local comedians. The vicinity of the Park was like a mass-meeting. Operatic prices were paid for seats. A company of the Seventh Regiment attended in a body. The audience included all classes—up-towners, down-towners, brokers, bootblacks, millionaires, newsboys, ladies from Murray Hill and from the Sixth Ward. So thoroughly representative an audience was probably never assembled at a theatre before.

This audience took charge of the proceedings at once, and stage-managed the performance in their own way. They insisted upon speeches from Harrigan, Hart and the leading members of the company; they presented Braham with a valuable violin. They encored everything and applauded everybody.

Here is the rich reward of good work, well done. Harrigan and Hart are still very young men, and they have risen by educated talent and conscientious labor. Their theatre is admirably managed, before and behind the curtain, without fuss or pretence. They give the public the best they have, and they restrict their performances to the local field which nobody has touched since Chanfrau won fame and fortune as the impersonator of a New York fireman.

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MR. WALLACK, evidently thinking that the public had laughter enough, opened the middle part of his season with the production of a new drama, called "Victor

Durand," written by Henry Guy Carleton, a young journalist who had distinguished himself by verses in the New Orleans papers, "Poker Sketches" in Life, and by writing a tragedy called "Memnon," which was accepted by John McCullough, but has not been performed.

Before "Victor Durand" was produced Henry Irving telegraphed that he had given Mr. Carleton a commission for a new play for the London Lyceum. No wonder, therefore, that all the literary and artistic world was interested in the new drama.

On the first night, the drama was an enthusiastic success. All the actors were called before the curtain; the author thrice bowed his thanks from a box. The daily papers praised the piece highly. A company was at once organized to send it through the provinces.

If I am disappointed in "Victor Durand," it is, perhaps, because I expected too much. Mr. Carleton's drama is odd, original, clever; but it is more like a Gaboriau novel than a play. The most dramatic incidents occur before the curtain rises. The audience have to be told the story instead of seeing it acted.

The hero, a young Frenchman, has been convicted and sent to the galleys for an assault with robbery, on a railway train, of which he is innocent. After two years he escapes from the galleys; takes a false name and marries, at Rome, a lovely American girl. The happy pair go to Paris, and then the play begins.

The villain, also in love with the American girl, recognizes the hero as an escaped convict and puts the police upon his track. The object of the villain is to force the hero to confess his crime, so that he may be divorced from his American wife. By a string of circumstantial evidence, the crime is at last brought home to the villain, who is led off to prison, while the hero is released.

Such a story as this is impossible anywhere, and especially in France. No divorce is needed, because a convict cannot marry. Examined from a common-sense point of view, the whole piece is absurd, and would almost serve as a burlesque upon modern French melodramas. But Mr. Carleton has written for the stage and for the audience, and, his starting-point once conceded, he builds up effective theatrical situations and surprises.

I am surprised to find a new dramatist leaving love out of his calculations in writing a play. He marries his hero and heroine before we see them. He makes his hero as unsympathetic as possible by sending him to the galleys and allowing him to commit the mean crime of marrying a lady under an assumed name. He depends for success entirely upon the clever manner in which the puzzle about the assault and robbery is solved through the finding of a note-case. He depends upon this for success, and he is successful. Nevertheless, I hope that he will give us a real play, instead of a puzzle, when he writes for Irving and Miss Terry.

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THE other serious play which upheld the legitimate drama against the sea of nonsense, was "Francesca da Rimini," with Lawrence Barrett, at the Star Theatre.

After many years of probation, Mr. Barrett has now become a New York favorite. He was heartily received, and he did everything possible to deserve his reception. "Francesca" was presented as a spectacle, with new scenery and costumes, madrigal boys and crowds of picturesque auxiliaries. Probably it will keep the stage during the whole of Mr. Barrett's six weeks' engagement at the Star. If not, Browning's "Blot on the Scutcheon" will be produced.

But Mr. Barrett does not depend upon himself and the two leading members of his company. He has frankly adopted the Irving system. He prefers the effects of ensemble to any individual prominence. He has chosen the right way, and he finds it not only artistically satisfactory, but unprecedentedly profitable.

Now Edwin Booth has come to the Fifth Avenue, and we have our two American tragedians together to contrast or compare. Mr. Booth has also waked up to the advantages of the Irving system. He is supported by the stock company of the Boston Museum, and new costumes and scenery have been prepared for him. Moreover, he revives the old plays in which his father was unequalled—"The Apostate," "The Iron Chest," "Don Cæsar." This is great enterprise for Mr. Booth.

Already, in only two seasons, Henry Irving has begun a reform in American theatricals, which will be permanent and important. Without knowing it, he came to us as a missionary. Doubtless he would modestly disclaim the credit for the impression he has made; but the facts speak for themselves.

STEPHEN FISKE.